

## Medical Practice Changes

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**Abstract:** This presentation will deal with the fundamental changes which are resulting from the creation of integrated laboratory networks under the impact of managed care compensation influences, the acquisition of solo practices by hospitals and the shift of inpatient to outpatient services. The limitations on reimbursement are increasingly influencing the order patterns of physicians as a result of awareness that laboratory costs may have an indirect effect upon the take-home pay of the physicians. The changes in requirements for turnaround time will be analyzed in terms of the effect this is having on the shift from testing in core laboratories to near patient and point-of-care testing situations. The economic pressures are also beginning to force hospital and integrated laboratories to contemplate increasing automation and robotization as a way of streamlining testing and reducing cost of testing in general.

As these interactions occur, the pressure being applied to clinicians is to contemplate reduction or optimization of test ordering, including the development of ordering algorithms which, in turn, will tend to affect the menus of laboratories. The automation and robotics, coupled to intelligent electronic decision making processes, will tend to increasingly involve reflex testing decisions, which are going to influence both the logic of test ordering, as well as the total operation of laboratory systems.